Depression During and After Pregnancy May Affect Children’s Development

Maternal depressive symptoms during pregnancy, in the first year postpartum, and in early childhood were linked with poorer child neurodevelopment in a recent Depression & Anxiety study.

In the study that included 2231 mothers, higher average maternal depressive symptoms during and after pregnancy predicted lower total developmental milestones, fine and gross motor skills, communication, problem solving, and personal/social skills when they were assessed in children aged 1.9 to 5.7 years.

“Our findings further suggest that antenatal and post-pregnancy depression have both independent and additive effects on neurodevelopment. Children of mothers with the most chronic and severe depressive symptoms during and after pregnancy had the most neurodevelopmental disadvantages,” said co–lead author Dr. Marius Lahti-Pulkkinen, of the University of Helsinki, in Finland.

Additional Information


About Journal

Depression and Anxiety, the official journal of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), welcomes original research and synthetic review articles covering neurobiology (genetics and neuroimaging), epidemiology, experimental psychopathology, and treatment (psychotherapeutic and pharmacologic) aspects of mood and anxiety disorders and related phenomena in humans. The journal publishes only two types of articles: original Research Papers and Reviews. A priority is placed on treatment and review papers, and on papers with information and findings that will enhance the clinical evaluation and care of individuals struggling with the effects of these disorders.

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